

Key Ideas from the Keys to Quality Accreditation Project



Keys to Quality Relationship to SALT
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Some of our sites have asked about the relationship between the SALT Survey (School Accountability for Learning and Teaching), which is required of all Rhode Island public schools in response to Article 31 and the self study surveys of the NAEYC accreditation process. Although both are self study tools involving the completion of surveys by administrators, teachers, and families, the content and scope are different. While, the core of both self study processes rests on the recognition and belief that children need to be well prepared in order to take full advantage of learning experiences, the climate of programs must be welcoming and supportive of all students and families and that all programs need valid and reliable information to plan and create learning environments to promote the highest levels of adjustment and achievement.

When the Rhode Island General Assembly passed Article 31 in the summer of 1997, it required school districts to collect information on finances, achievement, and school accountability. The SALT survey measures variables in dimensions of school functioning such as family involvement, school climate, student experiences, and community partnerships. As schools examine the results they must decide which elements need attention so the schools' structures support features such as integrative instruction, engaged families, or personalized learning communities. Collectively, these data inform and focus the school improvement planning process to help schools ensure that all students achieve at high levels.

The NAEYC accreditation process is designed for early care and education programs, preschools, kindergartens, and before- and after-school programs. Information about whether a program meets nationally recognized criteria for high quality is collected through various sources: parent questionnaire, administrator's report, classroom observation, and staff survey. NAEYC defines a high-quality program as one that meets the needs of and promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the children and adults who are involved in the program. Although criteria examine all aspects of the program, emphasis is placed on the quality of interactions between the staff and the children as well as the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum. Health and safety, staffing and qualifications, and the administrative and physical environments are all reviewed during accreditation but the primary consideration is the nature of the child's experiences.

These different, yet complimentary, self-study tools provide valuable mechanisms for examining and improving teaching practices and learning experiences that occur in programs.

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